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NCEW criticizes CIA acts uncovered by Senate

By Jane Levere

The executive board of the National Conference of Editorial Writers has issued a resolution in response to findings released in Senator Frank Church's Select Subcommittee's report on Intelligence Activities.

According to president John Zakarian of the *St. Louis (Mo.) Post Dispatch*, the NCEW is the first professional journalism organization to officially protest CIA practices described by the report, including employment, past and future, of American journalists as agents, and frequent placement of articles by CIA agents operating abroad as journalists in U.S. publications. (E & P, May 8).

The resolution states the long-standing concern of NCEW for the "integrity and accuracy of the information upon which editorial judgments are based" and also reaffirms its commitment to the principle that "its members should try always to avoid even the appearance of misleading

readers in any published material on their editorial pages."

The executive board of NCEW, it continues:

"1. Opposes the clandestine employment of American or foreign journalists by the CIA and urges that all such relationships be terminated immediately.

"2. Recognizing that information flows across international boundaries, opposes any planting of false or misleading information by the CIA in the media.

"3. Calls upon the CIA to release the names of journalists who are or have been in its employ, both to protect the reputations of those who were not and to give Americans knowledge they need to evaluate accurately what they have read."

Zakarian has written CIA Director George Bush for a meeting with NCEW representatives to discuss the matter. The resolution will also be submitted for inclusion in the records of the appropriate Congressional committees investigating the intelligence community.

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CIA volunteers sought by Bush

A scattering of boos and hisses here and there in the ballroom of the Biltmore Hotel followed one of the remarks of Central Intelligence Agency director George Bush before the Overseas Press Club annual banquet May 3 in New York City.

While pledging that the names of reporters employed in the past by the CIA would not be divulged, Bush asked for voluntary cooperation in the future.

"Having changed our overall policy to eliminate the paid use of journalists, I will not reveal the names of people who have helped this agency in the past or are willing to help this agency in the future."

The new director, acknowledging CIA past mistakes, said, "Show us our evils and we'll try to correct them."

The OPC dinner was scheduled on the free night of the crowded ANPA convention week in New York City.

MORI/CDF